

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE/COUGH ETIQUETTE

To contain respiratory secretions, all persons with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of presumed cause, should be instructed to:

- Cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Use tissues to contain respiratory secretions.
- Dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use.
- Perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Healthcare facilities should ensure the availability of materials for adhering to respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette in waiting areas for patients and visitors:

- Provide tissues and no-touch receptacles for used tissue disposal.
- Provide conveniently located dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub.
- Provide soap and disposable towels for handwashing where sinks are available.

Masking and separation of persons with symptoms of respiratory infection

During periods of increased respiratory infection in the community, persons who are coughing should be offered either a procedure mask (i.e., with ear loops) or a surgical mask (i.e., with ties) to contain respiratory secretions. Coughing persons should be encouraged to sit as far away as possible (at least 3 feet) from others in common waiting areas. Some facilities may wish to institute this recommendation year-round.